

## O'ahu Island Parks Conservancy

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### CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE on PARKS, COMMUNITY and CUSTOMER SERVICES MEETING

Tuesday, March 7, 2017

### BILL 23

### RELATING TO CITY PARKS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Aloha Chair Kobayashi and Committee Members:

The O'ahu Island Parks Conservancy is in general **support** of Bill 23, sponsored by Councilmembers Martin, Kobayashi and Fukunaga.

This measure ensures protection for Honolulu's public parks as free and open public recreation areas in the greater public interest, under the worthy and dedicated oversight of the Honolulu Department of Parks and Recreation.

Otherwise, should our public parks and green open spaces become encapsulated in private pursuits within a net of commercialization under, for example, the direction of the city's revenue-generating arm of the Department of Enterprises Services, we will lose the integrity that our public parks system was founded upon to serve the greater public interest.

The recent move to wrap historic Thomas Square in a cloak of construction fencing and attempt to simultaneously shuttle same to the Department of Enterprise Services that oversees commercialized activities and events on behalf of the City Administration, is just one such example. Such conditions demonstrate the proven need for Bill 23.

To be carefully noted respecting the measure's exclusions, however, is the additional protection of the Honolulu Zoo and the Waikiki Shell under the terms and provisions of the Kapi'olani Park Trust. And the protection of the Ala Wai Golf Course under HRS 46-65.7.

Overall, please ensure the preservation and protection of Honolulu's public parks in perpetuity as free public recreational green open spaces - to be open to and enjoyed by local residents and visitors alike under the care and management of the Department of Parks and Recreation. Please unanimously support Bill 23 in the greater public interest.

Sincerely,  
Michelle S. Matson  
President, O'ahu Island Parks Conservancy

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